

Atop the well he positioned a whim, a machine driven by a horse yoked to a long arm extending outward from a center capstan and gearbox. Cable was wound around a spool, raising a bucket from the well below. The bucket held more than fifty gallons and worked by a foot valve. At the top of the well a mechanism tripped the valve, and the water flowed freely. Smith caught the water in a holding tank and a system of wooden troughs. The air near the well was cool from evaporation off the wet soil and dampness rising from the well head. In such a dry locale, the only wet smell sweeter was that of thunderstorms rolling through the pinon pine forest.

Smith had not gone into the badlands thinking that just because he had water to sell the people would come. He had traveled the Nine Mile Road and had seen the number of freighters, travelers, mail carriers, and military and Indian agency personnel plodding along the terrestrial ribbon of dust. Before they could reach any Uinta Basin settlement, these travelers had first to cross the mighty Duchesne River. [The river is nothing compared to what it once was. With the advent of the Central Utah Project which took water from the confines of the Uinta Basin to areas along the Wasatch Front, the Duchesne River has been reduced to a trickle of its natural flow.]



Freighters hauled supplies to the fort and Gilsonite from the mines to the railroad. The most common method was a double team of horses or mules and tandem wagons